Instructor: Ira Dworkin
Course: ENGL 393
Title: Studies in Africana Literature and Culture: African Fictions (since 1958)

Description: While it is impossible to cover the literature of an entire continent in one semester, this course introduces students to some major African literary figures in the years since the 1958 publication of Chinua Achebe’s Things Fall Apart. The course will consider the range of narrative traditions produced by writers from the African continent in order to understand their role in the development of a range of local, national, and transnational cultural identities during the postcolonial era. This course will consider a range of topics that are central to the field of literary studies: religion, education, colonialism, postcolonialism, globalization, language, migration, memory, gender, childhood, and diaspora.

Proposed Readings: In order to examine the literature of a continent from a global perspective, we read essays by Binyavanga Wainaina, Ngugi wa Thiong’o, and Wole Soyinka, who in 1986 became the first African writer to win the Nobel Prize for literature. Additional course readings may include Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart; Tsitsi Dangarembga, Nervous Conditions; Hisham Matar, In the Country of Men; Tayeb Salih, Season of Migration to the North; Sony Labou Tansi, The Shameful State; Radwa Ashour, Siraaj; Ayi Kwei Armah, The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born; and Bessie Head, A Question of Power. Films may include The Little Girl Who Sold the Sun (dir. Djibril Diop Mambety) and Black Girl (dir. Ousmane Sembene).